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(56) Documents Cited

GB 2297881 A

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(58) Field of Search

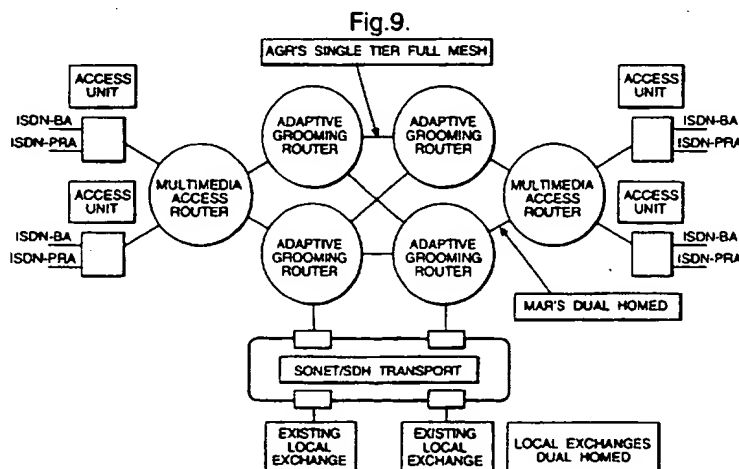
UK CL (Edition O) H4K KTK

INT CL⁶ H04Q

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(54) ATM network

(57) An open Services architecture for interworking narrow band services with equivalent broad band services delivers services on both the existing narrow band network and a future broad band network based on flexible signalling connections. The architecture incorporates an adaptive grooming router providing a fully interconnected backbone network function providing connectivity between a plurality of multimedia access routers and a narrow band network. The multimedia access routers provide hub points where access units terminating ISDN basic access and primary rate access lines used for multimedia services are terminated.



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Fig.1.

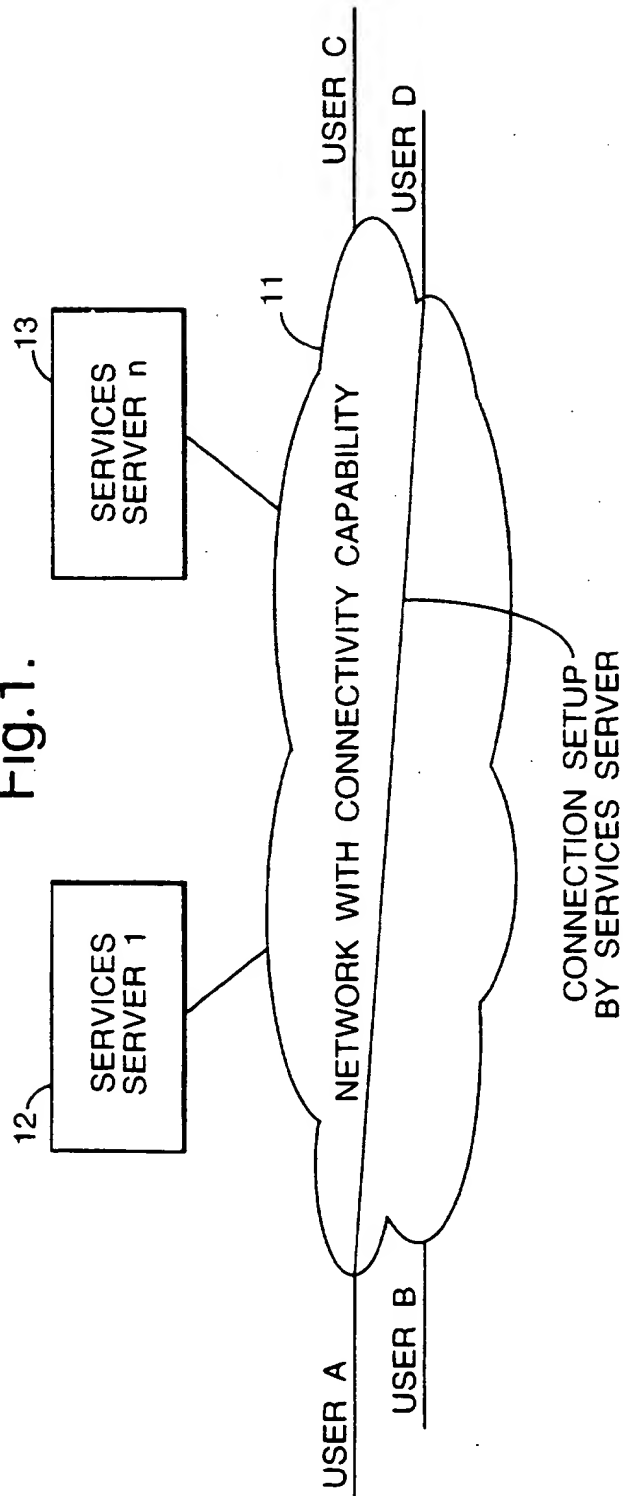


Fig.2.

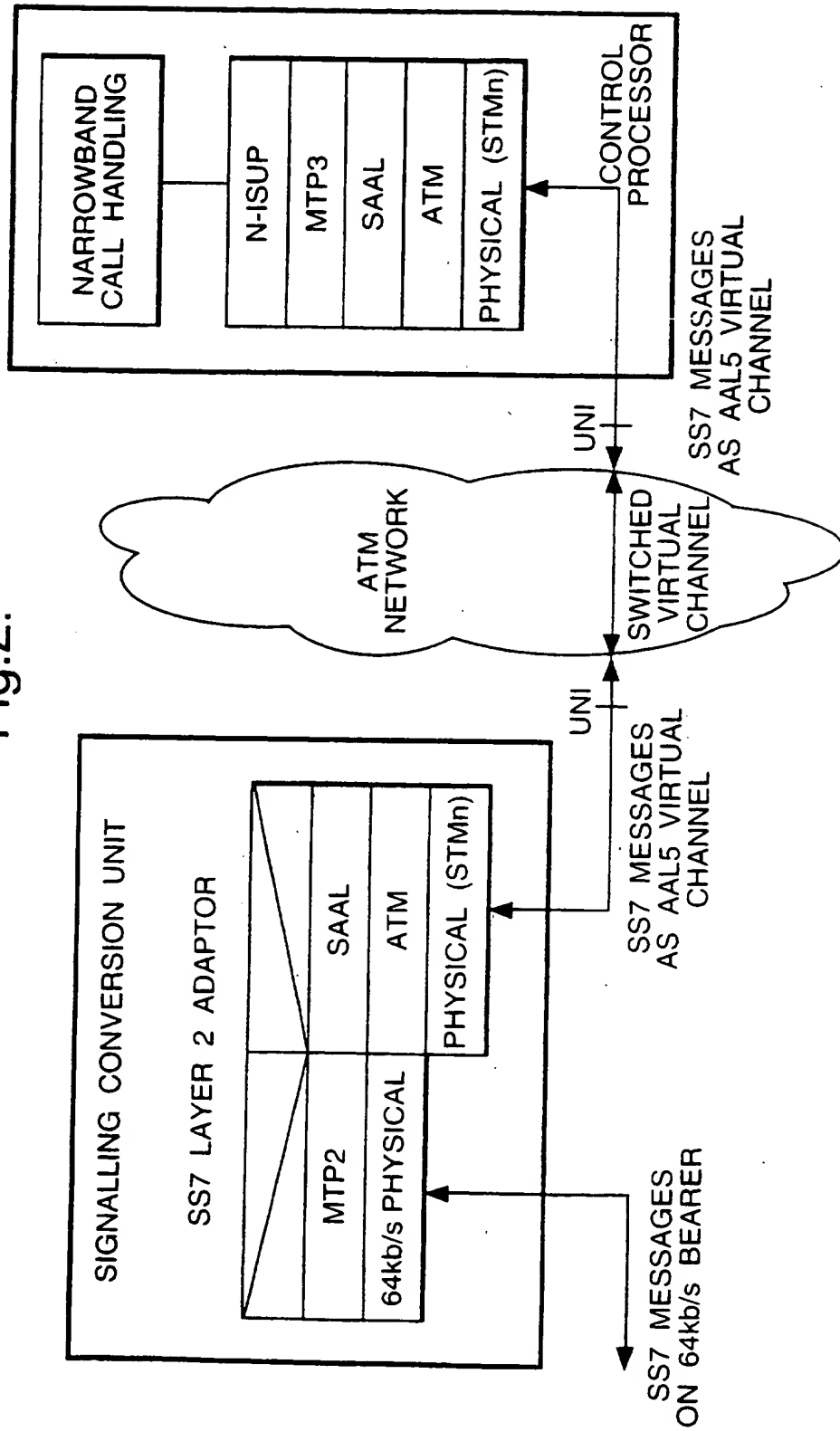


Fig.3.

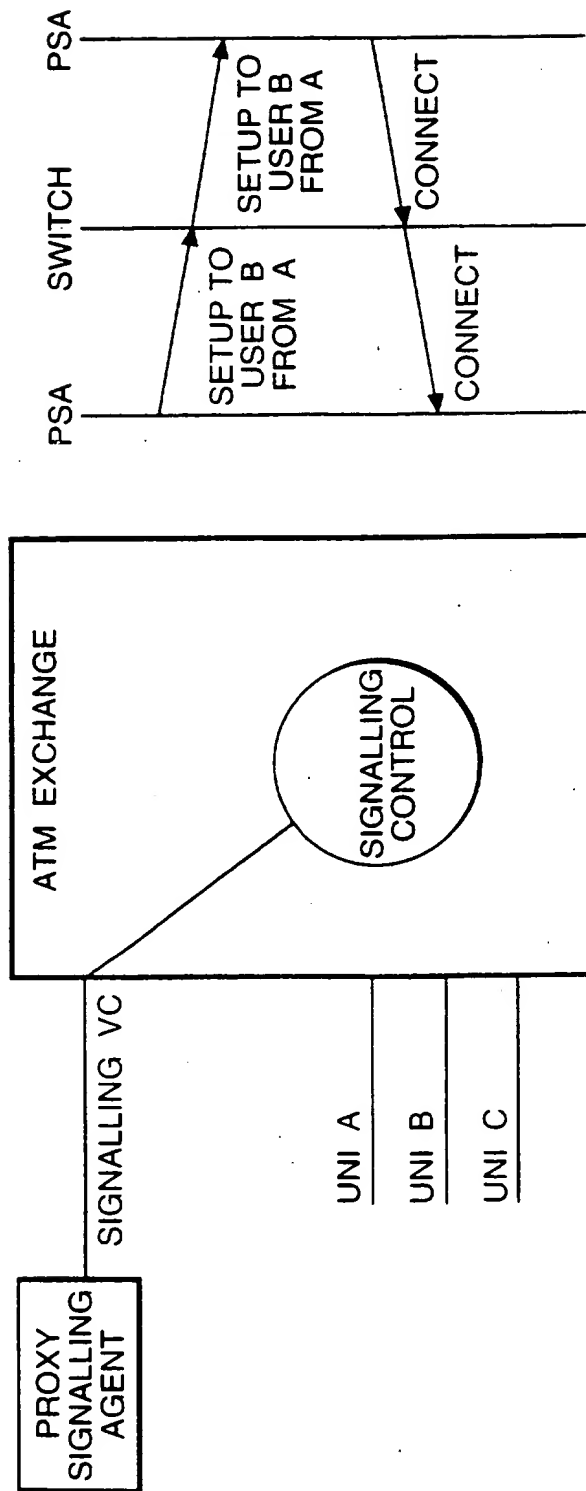
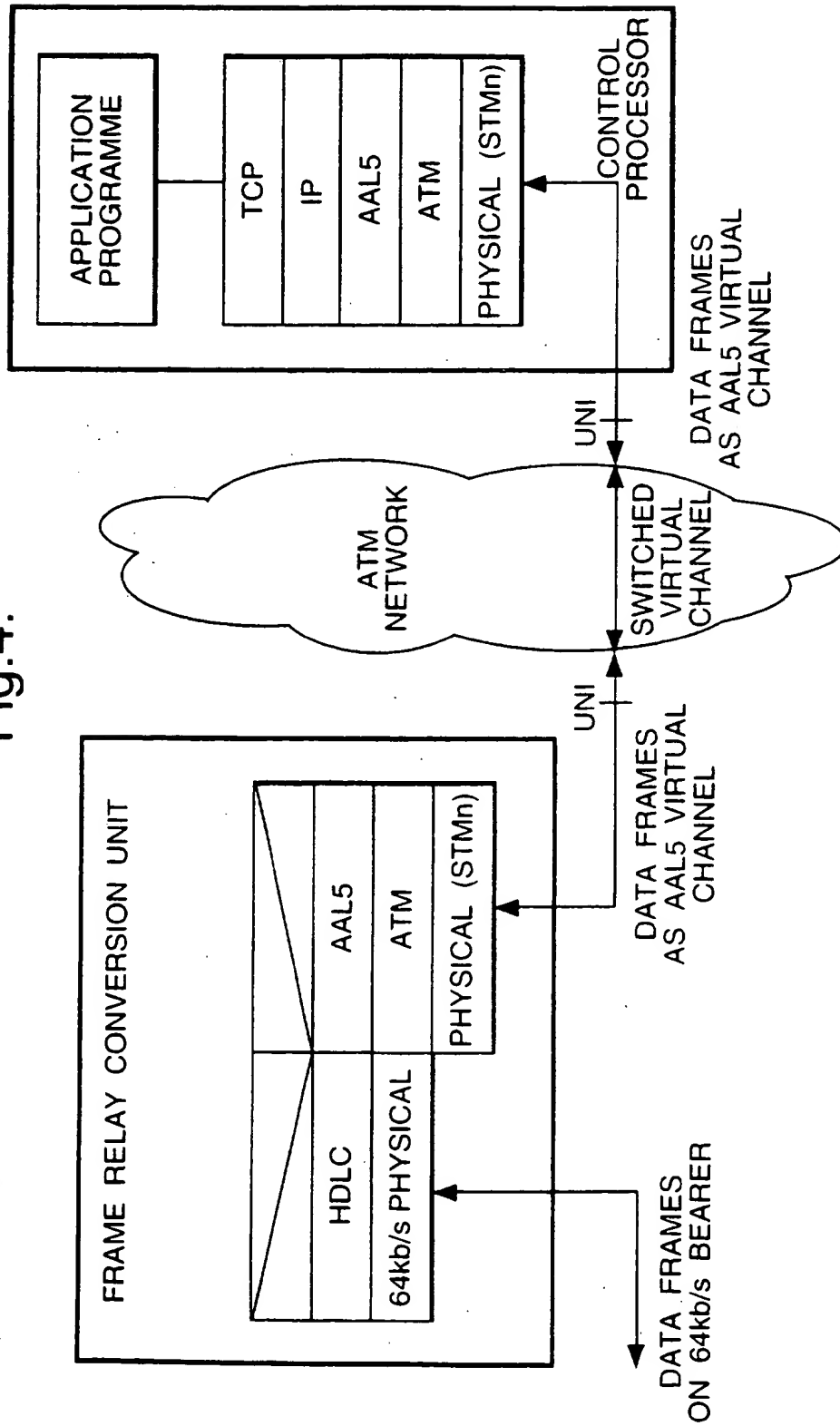
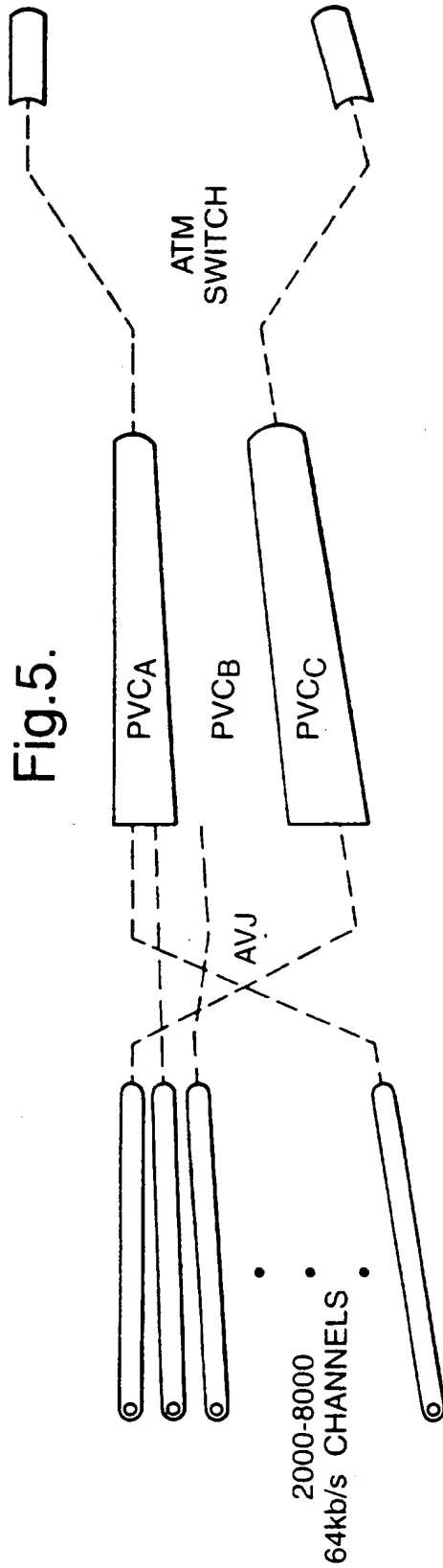


Fig.4.





EACH AVJ IS CONNECTED TO ALL OTHER AVJs BY A PVC.

EACH PVC CARRIES $n \times 64\text{kb/s}$ CHANNELS, $n \rightarrow n+/-1$ ON EACH CALL SETUP/TEAR DOWN

ALTHOUGH THE BANDWIDTH OF EACH PVC IS VARIABLE, THE TOTAL 64kb/s CHANNEL CAPACITY OF AN AVJ IS DIVIDED ACROSS THE PVCs, AND THE SWITCH PORT CAPACITY CANNOT BE EXCEEDED

Fig.6.

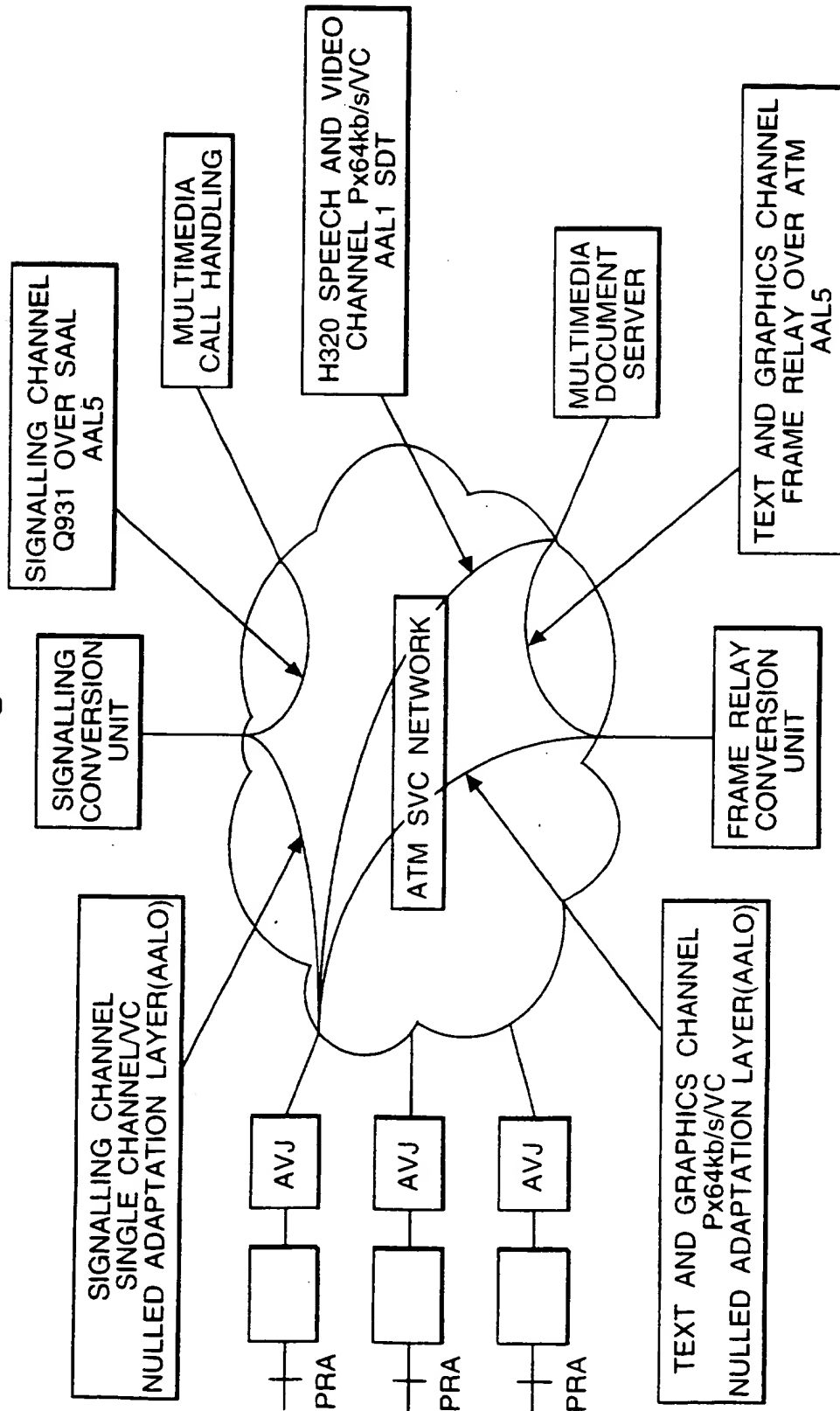


Fig.7.

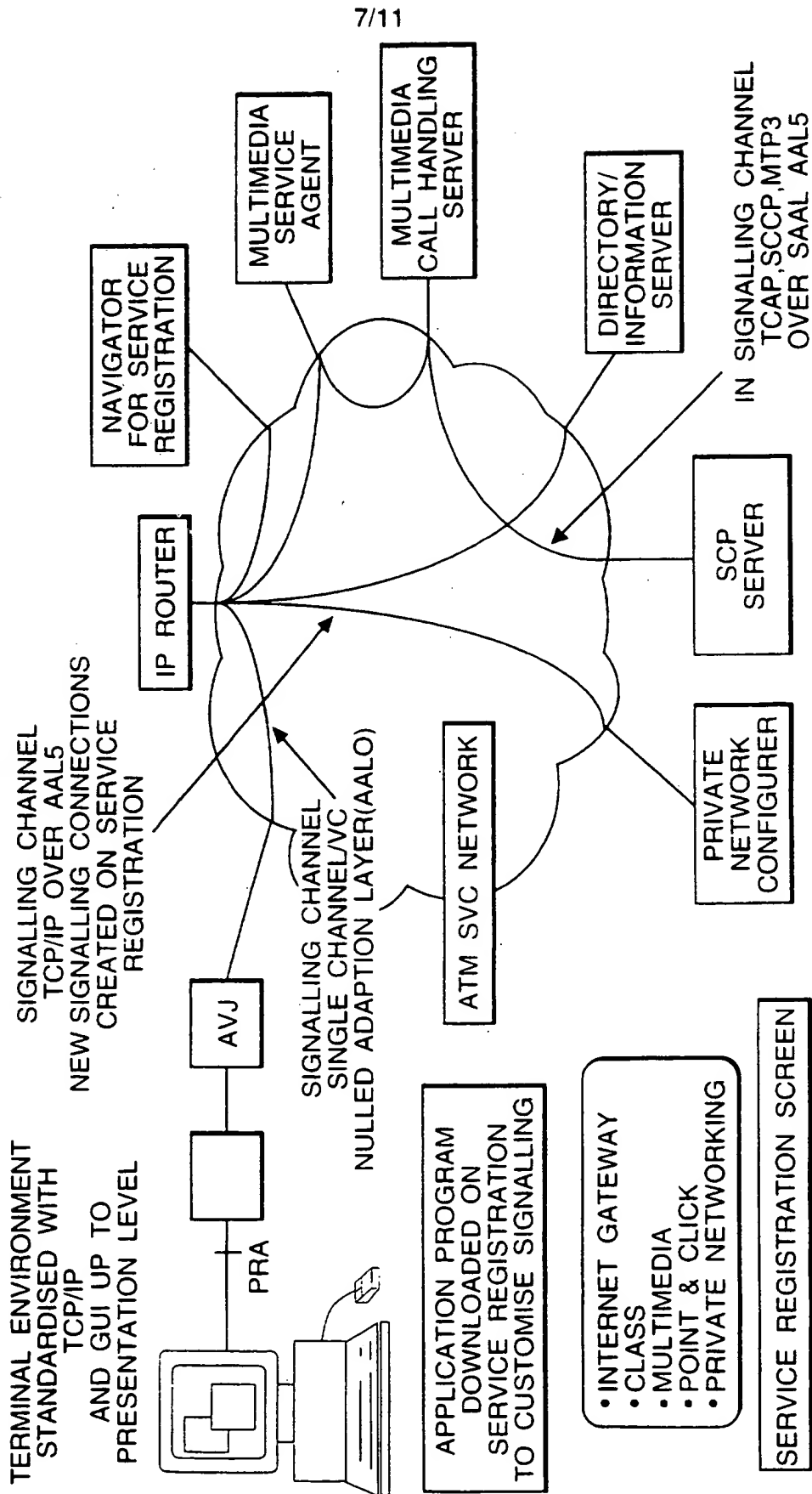


Fig.8.

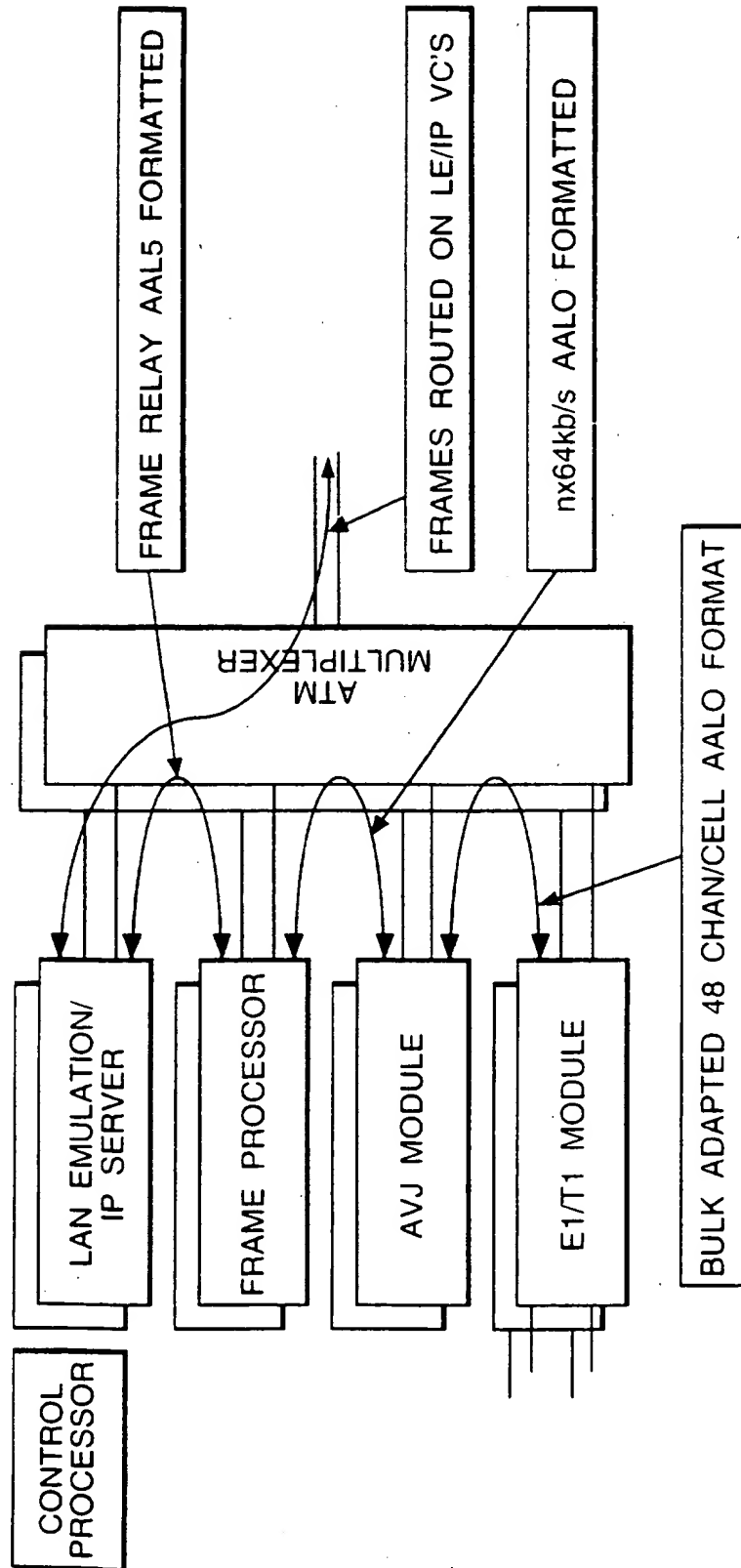


Fig.9.

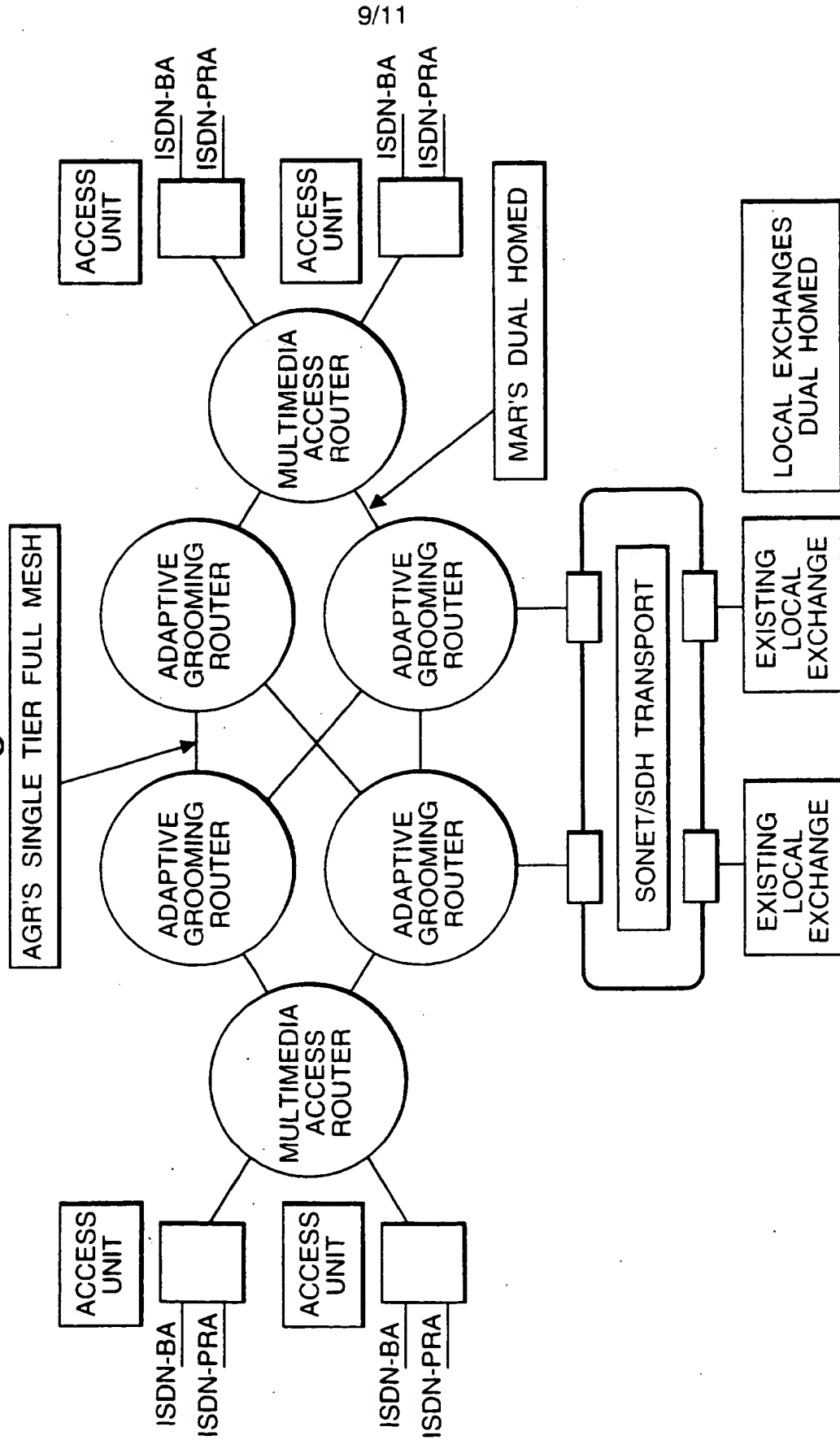


Fig.10.

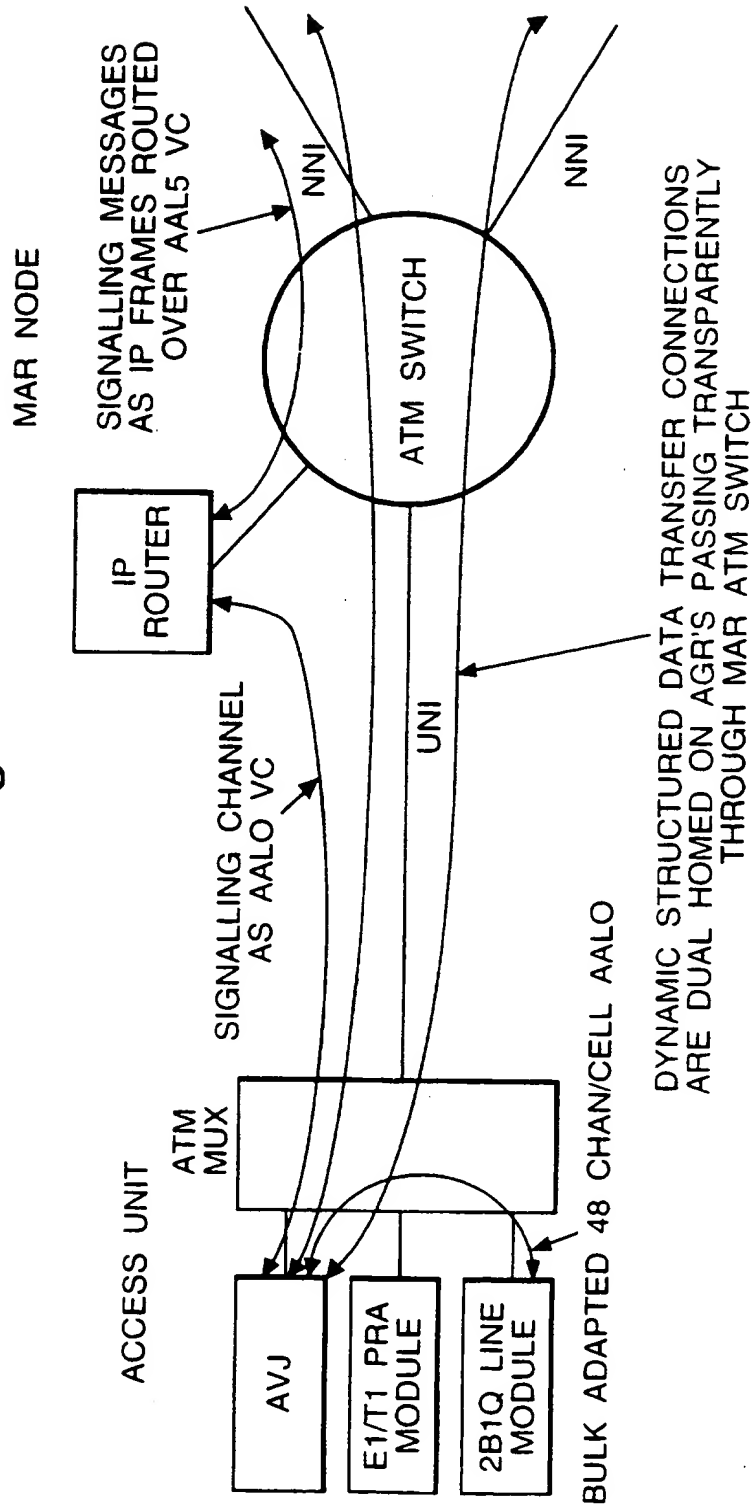
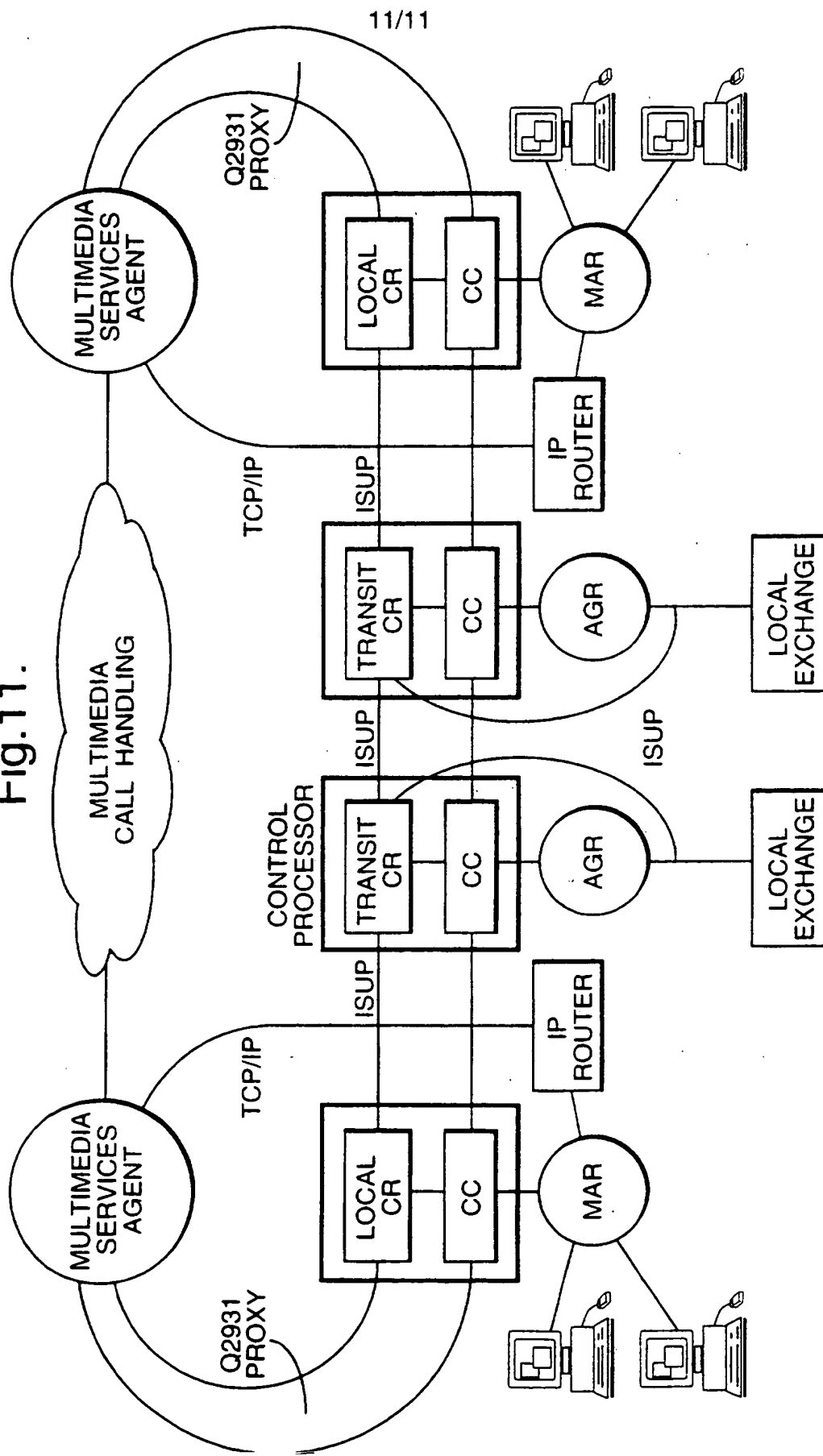


Fig. 11.



PROVIDING SERVICES IN A TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

This invention relates to telecommunications networks and in particular to the provision of services in such networks.

- 5 Within the Telecommunications industry there are a number of initiatives to unbundle telecommunications services from the switches which provide them. Currently this is embodied by Intelligent Networking (IN) whereby the switches are provided with a number of trigger points at which they send a message to a Services Control Point in order to establish the next
- 10 step in processing the call. Although IN has achieved many significant capabilities it is generally regarded as not being a sufficient separation of concerns to deal with the complexities that are now enabled by asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) networks.
- 15 In one approach to this problem, narrowband services are provided within the B-ISDN by mapping single 64kb/s channels into ATM adaptation layer 1 (AAL1 VCs) and connecting them as switched VCs across the network, this creates the difficulty that the cell assembly delay of six milliseconds leads to a substantial revision of the network delay plans and a substantial
- 20 increase in the requirement for echo cancellors, it also leads to the need for interworking between ISUP and B-ISUP signalling protocols leading to a substantial increase in the complexity of B-ISUP.

25 An object of the invention is to minimise or to overcome this disadvantage.

According to one aspect of the invention there is provided an open services architecture for narrowband services interworking with equivalent broadband services and incorporating adaptation means whereby the services may be delivered on both the existing narrowband network and a

30 future broadband network based on flexible signalling connections.

According to another aspect of the invention there is provided a method of interworking narrow band services with equivalent broadband services in a telecommunications network by providing flexibly switched signalling

35 connections.

An embodiment of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

5 Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of an ATM network incorporating an open services architecture;

Figure 2 illustrates the principle of switched signalling connections in the network of figure 1;

10 Figure 3 illustrates a method of proxy signalling in the network of figure 1;

15 Figure 4 illustrates a frame relay conversion arrangement for use with the network of figure 1;

Figure 5 shows the construction of an adaptive virtual junctor for use in the network of figure 1;

20 Figure 6 illustrates the provision of multimedia document access in the network of figure 1;

25 Figure 7 illustrates an internet signalling arrangement for use with the network of figure 1;

Figure 8 illustrates an IP router for use with the signalling arrangement of figure 7;

30 Figure 9 illustrates a narrow band multimedia network architecture applied to the network of figure 1;

Figure 10 shows a multimedia access router for use with the architecture of figure 9;

35 Figure 11 is a schematic diagram of an open services architecture incorporated in the network of figure 1.

Referring to figure 1, an open services architecture for an ATM network is illustrated in schematic form. In this architecture, users A, B, C, D are

connected to a network 11 which, within its internal construction, provides the single service of connectivity. This connectivity is capable of being invoked by a number of computing devices or servers 12, 13 external to the network which exploit the connectivity capability in order to deliver the services requested by the user. Within the general concept the network may have the scale of a full size operator network, e.g. of tens of million of lines, and the servers are provided with an open control interface. The servers would typically be procured independently of the network and may change and evolve over time without the necessity of the base network needing to be upgraded. With the case of an ATM based network, connectivity may be for different types of traffic e.g. variable bitrate, constant bitrate or available bitrate, and may be provided at any capacity up to the limits of the network interfaces provided either as point to point or point to multipoint.

The principle of switched signalling connections is illustrated in figure 2 for the case of the narrowband Signalling System 7. A signalling conversion unit is provided in order to terminate the message transport part 2 (MTP2) and to transfer the information content of the message onto the broadband equivalent signalling ATM adaptation layer (SAAL). This is a well understood function illustrated as a layer 2 relay function using the conventional protocol stack layer diagrams. The SAAL is an enhancement of the variable bit rate AAL5 VC. Control Processors designed to work into an ATM network are provided with AAL5 hardware as a matter of course. It is therefore possible to switch the SS7 message stream across the ATM network as an AAL5 VC and to process the messages in any control processor which is provided with the required layers of SS7 signalling software, i.e. SAAL, MTP3, N-ISUP and an appropriate call handling package. This is a completely open environment as all of the SS7 software layers as well as the ATM hardware in the control processor are specified as ITU standards.

The ATM Forum in its version 4.0 of its User Network Interface specification has introduced the capability for proxy signalling which is illustrated in figure 3. The principle is that a proxy signalling agent may be connected via any UNI of a switch or even on a different switch in the network and this agent will provide the signalling messages for calls to be placed on one or more client UNIs. The diagram of figure 4 illustrates a

proxy signalling agent acting on behalf of UNI's A,B and C and also shows a message sequence chart for a connection between UNI A and UNI B.

5 High Level Datalink Control (HDLC) is a well known way of formatting a frame of data for transmission across a physical data link, it is the underlying adaptation layer for SS7 signalling and ISDN D-channel signalling as well as being the adaptation layer for the Frame Relay data service. Figure 4 illustrates a conversion function between Frame Relay supported on 64kb/s TDM channels and an ATM equivalent which is carried over AAL5 VC's, this is in fact identical hardware to that required by the Signalling Conversion Unit shown in figure 2 although different software is required. Following the conversion from the 64kb/s to the AAL5 VC the Frame Relay data can be switched to an exactly similar Control Processor to that shown in figure 2 but in this case provided with software to process the underlying information content, this will typically require the Internet TCP/IP software together with some application programme.

20 In our copending application No.9511944.2 the use of an Adaptive Virtual Junctor (AVJ) in order to achieve 64kb/s switching on an ATM switch without incurring excessive cell assembly delay is described. This is illustrated in figure 5, the AVJ device is based on an enhancement to the ATM AAL1 Structured Data Transfer standard which allows a constant bit rate VC to carry an nx64kb/s TDM stream with a pointer mechanism to identify the individual channels of the nx64kb/s stream. The AVJ allows the number n of channels to be dynamically changed from n to (n +/- p) with the change being effected quickly enough to allow it to be performed to establish a new 64kb/s channel for a call and to release at the end of the call. This modified adaptation layer is termed dynamic structured data transfer (DSDT). As illustrated in figure 5, multiple AVJ's around an ATM switch are connected with a full mesh of DSDT VCs, with the AVJs negotiating to add 64kb/s channels to their DSDT VCs on a call by call basis. This results in the behaviour of the ATM switch emulating that of a normal narrowband switch. This also resolves the two problems identified with the present B-ISDN solution for narrowband services, as there are nx64kb/s channels in a VC and the cell assembly delay is negligible for n >= 6. In addition, the VC carrying multiple calls is permanently established so that the signalling used for its establishment (B-ISUP) plays no part in the narrowband call establishment: the signalling for the narrowband call

can remain as N-ISUP across the ATM network, so that an N-ISUP to B-ISUP to N-ISUP conversion process is not required.

5 The use of the above mechanisms to provide a multimedia document access service is illustrated in figure 6. This shows a number of ISDN primary access interfaces (PRA) connected into an ATM network via a number of AVJ devices. The AVJ has a mode of operation with no adaptation layer (AAL0) which it uses for data services which are protected by HDLC. This is used to effect a signalling channel connection for the D-Channel of the PRA to the signalling conversion unit which converts the LAP-D of the D-channel to SAAL and forwards the signalling messages as a cell stream to a control Processor acting as a multimedia call handling server. In the arrangement shown, the messages received indicate that the service required is to access a multimedia document server which will require two types of connection. A frame relay connection is required to access the text and graphics part of the multimedia document, this is made in two parts, a first connection is made from the AVJ to the frame relay conversion unit, this carries a Px64kb/s data stream using AAL0 and serves to separate the channels containing frame relay data from the other channels in the TDM multiplex, it transfers data without any awareness of the HDLC framing structure that it contains, the frame relay conversion unit identifies and terminates the HDLC frames and constructs an AAL5 VC which is the basis of the second connection which provides the text and graphics connection to the Multimedia Document Server. The second connection is made directly to the document server and is a Px64kb/s connection carrying an H320 narrowband connection which is a standard for narrowband Speech and Video. The AVJ converts this connection from its narrowband to its ATM form. This provides an Open Services Architecture for narrowband services based on flexible signalling connections.

35 The signalling system DSS1 of which Q931 is the layer 3 protocol is designed as a connection request interface which is fully standardised at this layer 3. In a Multimedia service network where multiple connections are made on a coordinated basis to provide a higher value service then it would be more effective to make high level service requests directly to a server rather than requiring the client terminal to specify each connection separately. In addition with Q931 being a fully specified standard at layer 3 it makes it difficult for the servers to customise the client terminals which

is a very useful facility as it enables the servers to differentiate their services. These issues are resolved by using the Internet standard TCP/IP as a replacement to the ISDN Q931 signalling, this being illustrated in figure 7. A Narrowband Multimedia terminal is shown which is

5 standardised to the presentation layer with some de facto standard such as Windows. This communicates with the TCP/IP protocol over the ISDN D-Channel to an IP Router which provides flexible signalling connections to Servers on the ATM network. IP Routers are able to route individual data frames to different destinations so that the flexible signalling

10 connection is established simply by providing the IP address of the server to the IP Router. TCP/IP can be used to download files to the multimedia terminal which can be used on registration with a server to download an application programme into the terminal in order to customise it for the particular type of service provided by the server. Illustrated in figure 7 are

15 a number of typical servers and the means of registering the terminal in order to use them. The multimedia terminal is always registered on to a navigator for service registration. Whilst operating at this level the terminal is provided with a registration screen which indicates the service networks that are available for provision of services. Clicking on a service network

20 identifier will cause the navigator to determine a server having available capacity and will make a signalling connection to that server which will result in an icon representing that server appearing on the terminal. Opening the icon will lead to a service request dialogue directly with the selected server. Servers illustrated are a private network configurer which

25 will allow a network of leased lines to be reconfigured to suit different time of day traffic patterns within a private network, a directory/information server which will allow telephone calls to be placed by typing a name and selecting a name and address from a screen provided from the directory to automatically connect the call, and an intelligent network services

30 control point (SCP) so that IN capabilities can be retained within an open services architecture. These are all possible services on an open services architecture but the service potential is not constrained as there are no restrictions that would prevent further capabilities being added.

35 An implementation of an IP router within the above system is illustrated in figure 8. The E1/T1 module terminates a number of digital trunk or ISDN PRA systems and adapts them to a form suitable for processing by the AVJ. In this case 48 channels are carried per cell with one cell per 125 microseconds and AALO adaptation layer. The AVJ extracts the signalling

- and data channels and establishes separate VCs for each one connected to the frame processor which is exactly similar to the Frame Relay Conversion Unit shown in figure 4. The frame processor terminates the HDLC and passes the data in an AAL5 cell stream to a standard ATM control processor. Lan emulation is a service specified by the ATM Forum which can be implemented in software and used to carry the IP data frames to the required destination; IP routing is openly available standard software.
- 10 A narrowband multimedia network architecture based on these principles is shown in figure 9. A switching system based on the AVJ arrangement shown in figure 5 is termed an adaptive grooming router (AGR) and is illustrated here as forming a fully interconnected backbone network function which provides connectivity between a number of multimedia
- 15 access routers (MAR) providing multimedia services and between these MAR's and the existing narrowband network. MAR's provide a hub point where access units which terminate the ISDN basic access and primary rate access lines used for multimedia services are terminated.
- 20 A possible implementation of a multimedia access router based on the above modular components is illustrated in figure 10. An access unit comprises modules for ISDN BA and PRA lines. These are connected to a colocated AVJ using a bulk adapted 48 channel per AAL0 VC. The AVJ separates out the signalling channels and connects these on individual
- 25 AAL0 VCs to the IP router module in the MAR node. The IP router converts signalling messages into IP Frames which are routed to the associated servers as illustrated in figure 7. The narrowband 64kb/s channels used for user traffic are aggregated into DSDT connections which are routed transparently through the ATM Switch in the MAR node
- 30 and are terminated on AVJ's within the associated AGR's. The MAR is thus able to make flexible signalling connections using its IP Router and to make traffic connections by interworking its AVJs with the AVJs of the associated AGRs.
- 35 The TINA Consortium has defined an Open Services Architecture which emphasises the separation of Connection Control from Call Control, connections are made at the connection control layer by means of operations on a Network Resource Information Model. The diagram of figure 11 shows a control architecture which permits this separation of

connection control from call control which may be achieved according to the TINA-Consortium concepts or by any other means.

5 The Open Services Architecture enabled by the system of flexible signalling connections is illustrated in figure 11. Multimedia Workstations are shown connected to Multimedia Access Routers, MAR's are connected to a network of Adaptive Grooming Routers to provide geographical scaling to the network, the AGR's in addition provide Call Routing capabilities to allow calls to be forwarded to the existing network. AGR's are provided with one or more Control Processors which provide Transit Call Routing based on SS7 signalling as well as Connection Control based on the the TINA Consortium Network Resource Information Model or some other scheme. The scheme of flexible signalling connections is as follows:-

- The signalling channels of the ISDN BA or PRA terminals are connected to an IP Router according to the mechanism of figure 10.
- 20 -On service registration a Multimedia Services Agent located on some arbitrary server will be allocated to the multimedia terminal using the mechanisms of figure 7. The IP address of the allocated agent will be passed to the Multimedia Workstation in order to enable routing via its IP Router.
- 25 -Interaction between Multimedia Services Agents and Multimedia Call Handling may use any suitable available means as this is an Open Services Architecture.
- 30 -The Multimedia Services Agent may invoke connections between Multimedia Terminals as part of some complex multimedia call or it may invoke a Call Routing function in order to route a call to the existing narrowband network. These signalling connections are made to the MAR hosting the multimedia terminal using the Q2931 Proxy Signalling standard
- 35 illustrated in figure 3.
- Call Routing in MAR's and AGR's and between AGR's and the existing network use signalling connections as illustrated in figure 2.

- As a result of all these signalling connections it is possible for a Multimedia Call Handling system running on Open ATM Control Processors to establish calls between multimedia terminals utilising any number and type of connections supported by the terminals and in addition to route calls of
- 5 normal telephony types to the existing narrowband network.

CLAIMS:

1. An open Services architecture for interworking narrow band
5 services with equivalent broad band services in an ATM network and
incorporating adaptation means whereby the services may be delivered on
both the existing narrow band network and a future broad band network
based on flexible signalling connections.
- 10 2. An open Services architecture for interworking narrow band
services with equivalent broad band services in an ATM network and
incorporating adaptation means whereby the services may be delivered on
both the existing narrow band network and a future broad band network
15 based on flexible signalling connections, the architecture incorporating an
adaptive grooming router providing a fully interconnected backbone
network function providing connectivity between a plurality of multimedia
access routers and a narrow band network, wherein the multimedia access
routers provide each a hub point where access units terminating ISDN
20 basic access and primary rate access lines used for multimedia services
are terminated.
3. An architecture as claimed in claimn 2, wherein each said
multimedia access router incorporates an access unit comprising modules
for for ISDN, BA and PRA lines connected to an adadptive virtual junctor,
25 and a router module, and wherein the adadptive virtual junctor is arranged
to separate out signalling channels for connection to the router module
whereby to access corresponding service agents.
4. An open Services architecture for interworking narrow band
30 services with equivalent broad band services in an ATM network
substantially as described herein with reference to and as shown in the
accompanying drawings
5. A method of interworking narrow band services with
35 equivalent broad band services in an ATM network substantially as
described herein with reference to and as shown in the accompanying
drawings



Patent Office

11

Application No: GB 9519813.1
Claims searched: 1-5

Examiner: Al Strayton
Date of search: 12 September 1996

Patents Act 1977 Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.O): H4K: KTK

Int Cl (Ed.6): H04Q

Other: ONLINE: WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

| Category | Identity of document and relevant passage | Relevant to claims |
|----------|--|--------------------|
| X | GB 2 297 881 A (NORTHERN) See the abstract | 1 at least |
| X | GB 2 291 562 A (NORTHERN) See the abstract | 1 at least |
| X | GB 2 291 561 A (NORTHERN) See the abstract | 1 at least |
| X | EP 0 631 456 A2 (ATT) See the abstract | 1 at least |
| X | US 5 414 707 (BELL) See the abstract | 1 at least |

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